



## TRANSLATION AS A HUMAN ACTION

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### **Abstract:**

Translation act, which has been regarded as a sub-discipline of linguistics for many years, has a theoretical structure as an independent science. In this context, his understanding of translation act has also changed. The act of translation does not only consist of linguistic and textual problems. The act of translation is no longer an interlanguage transfer process and is carried out within the framework of multilateral cooperation. The translator, who is expected to perform the translation act in all its dimensions alone, now directs translation in the context of cooperation as a social business. This new understanding of translation, which puts the translator at the center of the translation act, imposes a social responsibility on the translator. As an expert, the translator undertakes a social role by planning the translation act. Translation, which is an act of cultural transference from the source text, is expected to be reflected in accordance with its function in culture. In this sense, the emotions, creativity and conditions of the translator as a person affect the cultural transfer through the act of translation. Translation act is a process planned by the translator. This process is determined individually. In this respect, the individual structure characteristics and experiences of the translator who directs the translation act are also of great importance. While analyzing the text in the translation process, the translator must also implement translation strategies according to text differences. Otherwise, the balance between the source text and the target text will be disrupted. The act of translation, as an act of thought, is a human act of the translator that bridges different socio-cultural structures. In this study, the problems experienced by the translator while performing the translation act as a human will be examined. The importance of the identity of the translator who performs the act of translation as a cultural transfer function in the context of social cooperation will be examined. Problems arising from the fact that translation act is a human act will be interpreted as a qualitative research by scanning the relevant sources.

**Keywords:** translation, human, social cooperation, culture

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## 1. Introduction

The act of translation is a phenomenon as old as human history. Human beings want to get to know other living creatures and other societies in their own habitat and their efforts to communicate with them are all acts of translation. The ability to express one's thoughts through thinking and language, which distinguishes humans from other living things, has made human beings a social being. Their desire to know and communicate with societies that were different from themselves at first turned into a way of expressing themselves later. In this context, there has always been a need for a human translation act.

The act of translation has also contributed to the development of humanity and the formation of new civilizations. Ensuring the flow of information between different cultures and civilizations has been through translation. It is an indication of how important the act of translation is in terms of understanding how the accumulations consisting of the vital experiences of every society are formed and applied in life. It is a wrong perception to see the act of translation as an act that provides only linguistic communication. Translation action also helps build trust and remove prejudices between differences.

Translating is a thought activity. Thought is a human action. The task of translation as a human act is to bring together two different societies with different cultures and languages in intellectual contexts. Despite all the difficulties, the chief architect of this meeting is the translator. A translator is a person who carries out the act of translation with a mental effort and ensures that everyone understands the target text he has created. The experience, personal skills and techniques of the translator, who is an expert in communication between different cultures, are a human indicator of the translation act.

While the translator performs the act of translation, he realizes an intercultural transfer of translation rather than an intertextual one. The translator, who is the protagonist of this transfer, performs this action in a certain cooperation besides his own subjective equipment. The translator has to do the translation act in accordance with the purpose of the translation, taking into account the expectations of the target society. In this sense, it seems difficult as a human being for the translator, who is obliged to eliminate all the obstacles to understanding, to perform an objective translation act, while many translation acts are performed in almost every field.

## 2. Historical Process of Translation and Its Emergence as a Science

The act of translation has existed throughout history and has always remained on the agenda with its wide variety of social connections. The act of translation has brought together societies with different languages and cultures by acting as a bridge between people, cultures and civilizations. In this context, it has contributed to the development of inter-communal experiences by providing them with the exchange. Translation activists, who served humanity so much, sometimes paid a heavy price. The act of

translation was made orally, especially by the thinkers of that age, until the writing process. However, with the discovery of the article, humanity needed more translation action. Their desire to win supporters, especially with the translations of religious texts into different languages, reveals the vital importance of translation for that period. While the act of translation enabled many disciplines to develop independently, it did not find the place it deserved. In this sense, Yazıcı thinks as follows:

*“The intensive translation activity in history has mediated the development of many branches of science and the spread and sharing of knowledge. Sometimes because of political reasons, sometimes because of its interdisciplinary nature, this intense activity could not find the opportunity to question itself and could not take a place among other disciplines as an autonomous branch of science” (Yazıcı, 2005: 38)*

A brief look at translation history reveals the contribution of translation to the flow of history, to the development of science and to socio-cultural transformations. Although it is thought to be the Rosetta (196 BC) stone, which is considered the first example of the written translation text (Yalçın, 2015) with the same content in Egyptian and ancient Greek, 72 translators of the Torah (Septuagint, 247 BC) known as the conversion by. Later in Baghdad, the organization was like a translation institute named Beyt-ul Hikme = Knowledge House (M.S. 830), which became the representative of the translation act at that time. The translation school, which was established in the city of Toledo of Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries and translated Arabic scientific works into many languages of European countries, has become the center of translation. The presence of a printing press during the Renaissance facilitated the proliferation and flow of information. At that time, he was the intellectual of the Bible translation and Reform movement, who shed light on today's translation understanding. Luther is his most important translator. Again, during the Romanticism period, translations of literary works were made as well as religious works. In this sense, your country says the following:

*“Ancient Greeks, Uighurs, Islamic nations, Renaissance nations, German romanticism if they created something new and participated in the constant opening of civilization; This is only due to the very rich translation activities they have done in preparation for them and the deep and sincere axulamels that encounter these foreign influences.” (Ülken, 2016: 6).*

With the rapid development of technology in the 20th and 21st centuries, a period in which information exchange accelerated, parallel to the events in the world, has entered. In this context, the scope of translation act has expanded considerably and the need for translation has increased. Meeting the increasing demand for translation action brings a professional work. The act of translation, which was seen as a sub-discipline of comparative linguistics until the first half of the current century, has turned into an interdisciplinary way of working as an independent scientific discipline. In this sense, Eruz thinks as follows:

*"Translation studies, as a field of social science, broke with philology and linguistics in the 1970s. A paradigm shift took place during these times, as a result, this field of science was defined as an independent field of science, and this branch of science adopted an empirical, descriptive and interdisciplinary method of study. Philological, linguistic and pedagogical approaches were insufficient to explain the "phenomenon of translation". In 1972, James S. Holmes consolidated and debated the name of this new scientific field with his pioneering article "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies". Thus, theoretical and descriptive studies specific to translation, which were carried out in parallel with the application, started."* (Eruz., [http://ceviribilim.com/?page\\_id=1496](http://ceviribilim.com/?page_id=1496)).

With the emergence of the act of translation as an independent scientific discipline, instead of the classical translation understanding of word-to-sentence, an understanding of translation that acts in terms of the cultural dimension and approach to social life of translation has developed, making translation action based on social and cultural approaches, translation requires a multi-disciplinary work shows. With the establishment of various sub-concepts and the increase in research in the field of translation, an independent science called "Translation Studies" has emerged.

### **3. Relationship between Translation and Culture**

The transmission of cultural experiences of societies and their fundamental building blocks from generation to generation has been through language. Language brings together people who have experience in different processes at a certain note. Language not only mediates the transmission of the culture it belongs to, but also contributes to the meeting of different cultures. Language is not just a form of transmission to communicate from one language to another. Language is the reflection of the way of thinking of the society to which it belongs, the logic of the language and the cultural values of that language. Starting from the idea that translation is also an interlanguage transmission, it has a duty to express the form of expression in both languages. Hönig expressed the relationship between translation and culture as follows:

*"For Hönig, translation is a bridge from one culture to another. Translators are experts who build the bridge of deal. The translation bridge connects the bilateral culture and language society and thus enables the free exchange of words and ideas between the two cultures. Translation bridge helps to transfer texts from one side to the other without any problem."* (cited in Tosun; 2017: 266)

Translation act is thought as transferring the words to a different language. However, the meanings attributed to words in the source language are a result of cultural events. The act of translation should not be separated from the language and cultural context. It should be associated with the translation act of words within a certain cultural meaning. It is not possible to achieve full cross-cultural equivalence. However, the

common point where cultures meet is where translation action takes place. In this sense, Bee thinks as follows:

*"The intersection within the cultures is the area where the overlap takes place, the area where translation penetrates and finds its place through itself, in other words the place where translation takes place. The crossroads of cultures are the domain of translation. The entire field of cultures is, in a sense, the domain of translation."* (Arı, 2016: 29)

With the changing paradigm in the translation field, cultural orientation has brought the necessity of examining the words in terms of time and space, rather than just translating the words. Considering that words are not formed differently from social norms, the act of translation should be formed within the framework of the cultural context. It is not a new phenomenon that translation act mediates intercultural communication. The manifestation of both cultural and social power of Çükü translation has greatly influenced human history. The fact that translation studies are only carried out in a cultural dimension started as a new approach for the translation field. B. Mialet thinks about the cultural transformation of translation:

*"Cultural transformation in translation studies, by showing a transition from textual approaches to broader cultural approaches, directs the research to what functions they have in the target culture and how the concepts of cultural manipulation, ideology and power are handled. As a result, he focused on cultural interaction studies by making translation studies of cultural transformation an interdisciplinary field."* (Cited in Arı, 2014: 20-21).

The act of translation as an independent scientific discipline is mostly related to culture. Translation, which is a special form of linguistic communication, has to convey the relation of all components of culture. The fact that language, which is the main material of translation, is the main carrier of culture, means that two different languages meet in the act of translation, means that two different cultures meet.

#### **4. Subject of the Translation Action Translator**

The translator is the person who is at the center of the translation act. Considered as an object of translation between two languages in the historical process, the translator is now at the center of translation as a result of the paradigm change in translation action and plays an important role. In this sense, the translator is an expert in intercultural communication according to contemporary translation theories. The translator, who is envisioned to be able to make independent decisions regarding the translation act, must also be equipped to take responsibility for intercultural communication. While contemporary theories make the translator the subject of the act of translation, he has assumed responsibility for being competent for both languages and cultures. According to Yalçın (2015), the translator should know the source and target culture very well. A

translation based solely on giving the meanings of words is incomprehensible to the target culture reader. Bee thinks as follows on this issue:

*“With the transition from text-focused translation research to culture-focused translation research, the translator subject, which has not been emphasized much until today, has become the center of research. In addition, the features and equipment that the translator should have, playing an active role in the translation process, the role in translation; A number of factors have come up, such as the role of the translator in the social system as influencing and affected.” (Ari, 2014: 40)*

The translator, the subject of the translation act, is obliged to ensure that the source text is understood by the target reader with minimal loss of culture. For this, the translator's source text should be well read and interpreted. The translator has to analyze each sentence in the source text and examine what he wants to tell in a cultural context. Eventually, the translator will begin interpreting and rewriting the source text. According to Eco, the source text is a dead text and the translator is the person who brings it back to life by recreating it with his own equipment. Translator is both a good reader who understands all aspects of the source text and a writer who brings it to the target culture. Tosun states that the act of translation from Eco's mouth was carried out by the translator as both an exemplary reader and an exemplary writer:

*“The translator is Eco's exemplary reader. The translator is a reader and commentator assigned to read the text. The exemplary reader differs from other empirical readers in that the subject is designed according to him and he is an expert on the subject. The sample reader is equipped to interpret and direct the text. In the sense of Eco, the translator interprets the text as a sample reader and is also an exemplary writer while creating the target text.” (Tosun, 2007: 284)*

The translator is constantly at the center of the translation act, with his own subjective thoughts and objective attitudes. However, the translator's application of a single method in each source text translation will create problems in the mental and perception process. While the translator is expected to produce a text suitable for the target culture system, it is expected not to ignore the cultural characteristics of the source text. As a human being, the translator should always be involved in the translation act and play the role of expert mediator in intercultural communication.

## **5. Translation Strategies and Translator**

The individual wants to achieve a certain goal with the construction of a job. For this, it is necessary to make certain planning before starting work. The planning made in this direction for the individual to reach his goal is called a strategy. It is envisaged to act within a certain plan in order to do a job better and achieve an efficient result. In this context, it is possible for the translator dealing with the translation business to use a

certain way and methods in order to perform a successful translation action with translation strategies. Translation strategy means, according to Suçin:

*“The translation strategy is used to express a series of options and decisions determined by the translator according to the aims and norms of the translation before translating the text and during the translation process.” (Cited in Yalçın, 2015: 96)*

Translation strategies help translators translate from source to target text with minimal translation loss. Faced with different text types, the translator should apply for translation strategies in order to perform a successful translation process. Translation problems that may be encountered during translation action can be overcome with the least loss by using the appropriate translation strategy. For this reason, the translator has to provide the closest equivalence between the source and target texts by making a series of plans before the translation act. Translation strategies that facilitate the translator's job while performing the translation act and will be a light for him on his way to darkness and according to Mona Baker (1992) are given by Yalçın as follows:

*“Translation by alienation, Translation by emulation, Translation by indigenization / Localization, Translation by cultural borrowing, Translation by compensation (substitution), Translation by privatization (Sub-meaning translation), Translation by generalization (Metabolism), Translation by explanation, Addition Translation by inference), Translation by subtraction, Translation by inference, Translation by displacement, Translation by adaptation, Translation by standardization, Perspective translation, Communicative Translation, Literal (word for word) translation.” (Yalçın, 2015 : 100-101)*

The translator is not completely free when transmitting languages- and intercultural transfer from the source text to the target text. The target text should be created to meet the expectations of the target reader. The social rules in which the target reader lives, ethical rules and the requests of the institution that imposes the translation job on the translator are effective in the translation process. For this, the translator should determine his strategy while performing the translation action. Although the translation will be read in the target society, it is very important that the translation product reaches its intended goal. In this sense, Eruz states that the translator should pay attention to the following issue:

*“The translator, on the other hand, is the person who makes the process of reconstruction of the text transparent for the target culture before creating the target text. He has to rewrite the target text in the position of the expert, updating the norms that are valid for the creation of the target text. In this sense, the translator cannot isolate himself from the dominant norms surrounding the translation process and takes the translation decision taking into account these norms, because the dominant norms are an integral part of the*

*translation culture. Its rate of intervention to the text is only possible within the framework of the translator's ethical approach and expert."* (Eruz, 2008: 49).

The translators' attitudes and translation methods during the transformation of source texts into target texts are determined in order to perform the translation action better. The path aimed by the translator, who makes certain mental analyzes before the translation act, is his own strategies. With the help of translation strategies, the translator performs the translation act in the most objective way, without causing any linguistic and cultural misunderstanding between the source text and the target text.

## 6. Conclusion

The fact that the act of translation emerges from the position of the translator as an object to directly mediate the transfer of words from a language to a language, and becomes an expert who can evaluate it in social-cultural terms, is the biggest indicator of translation as a humanitarian act. Which reader the translation act wants to reach and the quality of the social relationship to be established between the source text and the target text depend on the translator's equipment. It is a very important fact that the translator takes into account the functionality of not only in-text but especially non-textual effects of the translation act and ensures the comprehensibility of the translation text.

The translator has individual characteristics as a person who conducts an intercultural communication. While performing the translation act, creativity, intuition and experiences play a major role in the decision-making process according to the text and reader type. The fact that the translator does not ignore the absence of cultural losses in the source text and the translator's decision to translate which text to the target culture using which translation strategy adds a different human dimension to the translation act. Translation methods and techniques are items that assist the translator in performing the translation act. Translation methods are based on the theories that the translator acquired during his education, while translation techniques are entirely subjective and based on the translator's constant use and internalization experience. This is a proof that the text produced by the translator is related to his own strategy and humanitarian attitude. The act of translation, which is an act of human thought, is a form of human behavior that takes on the role of an intermediary bringing together different cultures, which are also the products of human civilizations.

Due to globalization in the last century, the translation act, which has undertaken different tasks in every field and expanded its scope by gaining different dimensions, contributes to world peace with its services in social-cultural fields. In this age when inter-communal communication and transportation are getting very fast, the act of translation shows that it is a humanitarian action by meeting all kinds of linguistic communication needs of humanity.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.



### About the Author

Coşkun Doğan, as a Teaching Staff and Researcher at Trakya University since 1999, has been conducting research in the fields of Translation, Foreign Language Teaching, Immigration, Multiculturalism and Gender. The subjects he researched include formal and non-formal education within the framework of socio-cultural values. He holds a doctorate in Translation Studies and is currently working as an Instructor in the Department of German Language Education.

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